

# 2012 GAG AND RED GROUPEY MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS

## Reef Fish Amendment 32

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*June 2011*



#### **Why are new gag and red grouper management measures needed?**

- A recent stock assessment indicated gag is considered overfished (population abundance is too low) and undergoing overfishing (rate of removal is too high) so a rebuilding plan is needed.
- A recent stock assessment indicated the red grouper population size has declined since 2005, but the decline for red grouper was not sufficient for the population to be considered overfished.
- A large part of the declines in the gag and red grouper populations were thought to be caused by some type of mortality event in 2005 (most likely associated with red tide) that resulted in additional fish being killed beyond those from fishing and usual natural causes.

#### **Who is developing the management measures?**

- The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will develop this amendment and submit it to the Secretary of Commerce for approval.
- The Southeast Regional Office (SERO) of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) assists the Council in developing the management measures, assists in the amendment approval process, and implements resulting fishery management regulations.

#### **What management measures are being proposed?**

- Amendment 32 contains several actions.
- Gag actions include:
  - A rebuilding plan for the gag stock;
  - Establishing or modifying recreational bag limits, size limits, and closed seasons;
  - Applying commercial gag quota adjustments to account for dead discards;
  - Changing the commercial gag size limit.
- Red grouper action includes increasing the recreational bag limit.
- Gag and red grouper actions include:
  - Adjusting individual fishing quota program multi-use individual fishing allocations;
  - Establishing new or revised time and area closures;

- Modifying current gag, red grouper, and shallow-water grouper accountability measures.

### **When do the management measures need to be in place?**

- Current temporary gag and red grouper regulations will expire at the end of November.
- Measures from Amendment 32 should be in place before the temporary measures are set to expire.
- The temporary measures can be extended for another 186 days should management measures from Amendment 32 not be in place.

### **How can I find out about what management measures are being discussed?**

- Amendment 32 is available on both the Council's ([www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org)) and SERO's ([sero.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov)) Web sites.
- A description of the actions and alternatives can be found in Section 2 (Alternatives) of Amendment 32.
- A description of the effects on the human environment can be found in Section 5 (Environmental Consequences) of Amendment 32.

### **How can I submit comments on the actions and alternatives?**

- The Council will be taking final action at their August 2011 meeting in Austin, Texas.
- The Council will take public testimony at this meeting (visit [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org) for meeting details) or comments can be sent to the Council via mail, fax, or e-mail. The contact information is: Mail: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 N Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, Florida 33607; Fax: 813-348-1711; E-mail: [info@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:info@gulfcouncil.org).
- SERO will be taking public comments on the draft environmental impact statement until July 25, 2011.
- Instructions on how to submit comments on the draft environmental impact statement can be found at the following links:
  - [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/bulletins/pdfs/2011/FB11-050\\_Amend32\\_Comment.pdf](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/bulletins/pdfs/2011/FB11-050_Amend32_Comment.pdf)
  - [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/pdfs/Amendment\\_32\\_Dear\\_Reviewer\\_Letter.pdf](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/pdfs/Amendment_32_Dear_Reviewer_Letter.pdf)

### **Related Links:**

- Red grouper regulatory amendment:  
[http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/pdfs/2010\\_Red\\_Grouper\\_Regulatory\\_Amendment\\_91710\\_final.pdf](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/pdfs/2010_Red_Grouper_Regulatory_Amendment_91710_final.pdf)
- Gag 2011 interim rule Environmental Assessment, Regulatory Impact Review, and Regulatory Flexibility Act analysis:  
[http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/pdfs/draft\\_EA\\_2011\\_gag\\_interim\\_rule.pdf](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/pdfs/draft_EA_2011_gag_interim_rule.pdf)
- Frequently Asked Questions on Gulf of Mexico Grouper Management in Federal Waters:  
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/pdfs/Gulf%20Grouper%20FAQs%20Feb%202010.pdf>
- Frequently Asked Questions on 2011 Red Grouper Measures and Gag Temporary Measures:  
[http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/pdfs/Gulf\\_Grouper\\_May\\_2011\\_FAQs.pdf](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/pdfs/Gulf_Grouper_May_2011_FAQs.pdf)